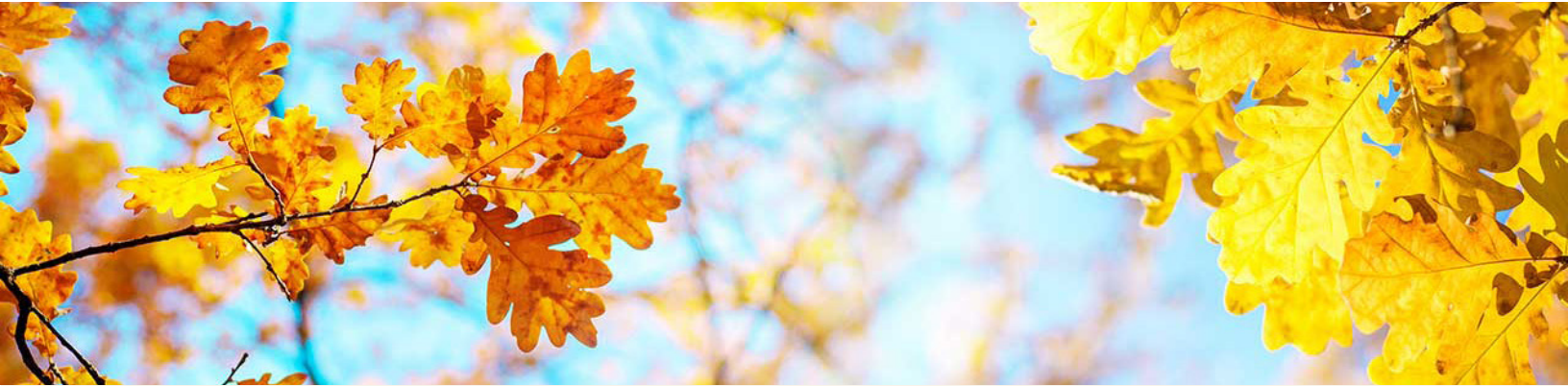


Your Mind Matters

Preserve Your Brain Health for Your Best Life



FEATURED ARTICLE

Raising Awareness of Alzheimer's Disease and for Supporting Caregivers

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan deemed November as *National Alzheimer's Awareness Month*.

Today, we carry this tradition forward as a way to acknowledge the more than 6.2 million Americans and their families that currently live with the disease today. To raise awareness through education, here are some facts about Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia that may be helpful to know:

- Dementia is a term used when memory loss and cognitive decline affect a person's daily life.
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and accounts for almost 80% of dementia cases.
- The cognitive decline seen in Alzheimer's is not a part of normal aging.
- Although Alzheimer's is most common in old age, there are over 200,000 people in the United States under the age of 65 who have early-onset Alzheimer's disease.
- Alzheimer's is a "neurodegenerative disease" – that means it will get worse over time and to date, there is no cure.

November is also a month to raise awareness and honor family caregivers.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton deemed November to be *National Family Caregivers Month* to recognize the commitment of those family members who offer compassionate round-the-clock care to their loved ones.

On an ongoing basis, family caregivers must balance the needs of their care-recipient and their families with little consideration of their own needs.

So, this November, let's make a commitment to acknowledge those living with Alzheimer's disease and to honor the caregivers who provide compassionate care to their loved ones every day. Learn more about early screening for Alzheimer's disease, join an Alzheimer's fundraising event or make a donation. And, always be sure to support caregivers whenever you can.

By Marilyn Abrahamson - Brain-Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health.

BRAIN HEALTH MINUTE

EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF NATURE

Anyone who has ever enjoyed being outdoors knows the effect that nature has on our wellbeing. But how much time do we need to spend outside to reap the benefits?

The answer: Two hours a week.

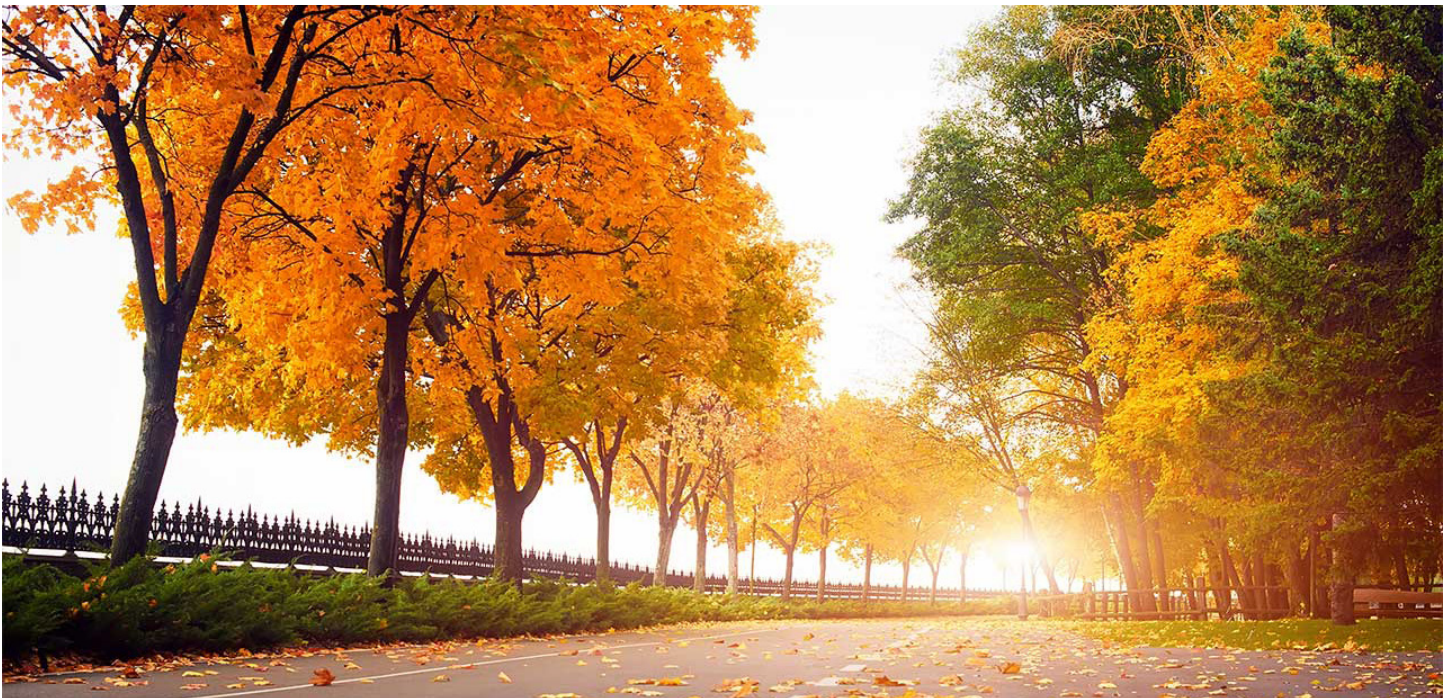
A [study](#) done in 2019 with 20,000 participants showed that people who spent at least 2 hours per week outdoors were more likely to report better physical and mental health.

The sticking point? The participants who spent less than two hours per week outside got no benefit from the time that they did spend outdoors.

The moral of the story? Get outside and enjoy!

- Take a walk through a park or even around your neighborhood.
- Sit on a bench and become mindful. Sense the breeze blowing through the trees.
- Instead of your treadmill, find a local trail.
- Try some hiking or bike-riding.
- Spend a night camping.

It doesn't matter what you do, just get out there and do it!



*The season of family gatherings is upon us. Ask your physician how getting the **Covid-19 and flu vaccines** can help to **protect you and your family**.*

For more information about brain health or caregiver support please visit the **Ceresti Brain Health Education portal** at brainhealth.ceresti.com and enter code **GIVECARE**.

TAKE CARE OF YOU

Be Your Own Best Friend

Have you ever noticed that when you're going through a difficult time, it's hard to be objective? Yet, if a good friend has a problem you are able to offer compassionate and well-thought-out advice. Why is it so difficult to help ourselves?

Objectivity is a gift that we don't often offer to ourselves, but there is a way to do it with self-compassion.

Here's how:

- *Use a small notebook, journal or even a Word document on your computer.*
- *Think about a problem that you're experiencing. Then, imagine that the person with the problem is your best friend. Write the problem on the page using your own detailed words and feelings.*
- *Then, think to yourself, "if my best friend needed support, what would I tell this person?" Formulate a response as if you're offering the advice not to yourself, but to your friend - using your own name in the third person throughout your response.*

Writing your response in third person will help to separate you from the emotional baggage that blocks your ability to think rationally and make good decisions for your own wellbeing.

Keep in mind, this strategy may help you resolve many of your own issues, but you shouldn't have to shoulder your burdens alone. Reach out to a trusted friend, or a licensed counselor for help when needed.

As always, **take care of YOU.**

MEMORY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did You Take Your Medications Today?

No matter who you are, whenever you do something as part of a daily routine, it can be difficult to remember if you did it or not. Routines are ways to do things mindlessly and quickly, so you don't have to think when you do them.

Too often, managing medications becomes part of a daily routine so it's often difficult to remember whether they were taken or not, which is why having a specific memory strategy in place is so important.

In this case, it doesn't always matter which memory strategy you choose. That's because, the purpose of using a memory strategy is to force you to pay attention when you're taking the medications. Then, you do something mindful to indicate that it's done, which is what makes the memory stick.

If you happen to forget if you've taken your medications, you'll have some indication that it's done or that it's not.

With this in mind, here are four low-tech, simple strategies you can try:

- *Tie the task of taking your medications with another part of your daily routine – Perhaps you can take your medications with a specific meal each day. If you take them with breakfast, you can always set everything out with your breakfast dishes the night before so they will be at the table when you sit down to eat.*
- *Turn your pill bottles upside down after you take them – This works best if you take your pills twice daily. When you take them in the morning, turn the pill bottles upside down after you take them. When you take them again, return them to their upright position. If you only take pills once a day, be sure to return them to their upright position before you go to bed.*
- *Mark your calendar – Put a little checkmark on the current date in your calendar each time you take your pills.*
- *Set a daily alarm – Try setting an alarm on your phone or alarm clock each day when it's time to take your medications.*

Taking medications is important for your health. If you feel that the tips above are not enough, be sure to ask for help within your support system.



Norwell Executive Center
167 Washington Street
Norwell, MA 02061

Your health plan has partnered with Ceresti to offer you the **Ceresti Family Support Program**. To determine if you are eligible for this program, contact (442) 273-2256.

MONTHLY BRAIN CHALLENGE

Giving Thanks with Gratitude



It's almost Thanksgiving, so this month's focus will be the spiritual aspect of your brain health.

A healthy spirit - *how you feel about yourself and your life* - is a key to brain health and it's essential to help you to view life with perspective and grace. It helps to reduce stress by giving our brains a sense of calm and it gives us the ability to cope with adversity in a healthier way by slowing down and looking within ourselves for happiness. Studies show that by nurturing our sense of gratitude, we can shift our minds from seeking out the negative aspects of our lives so we truly see all the things that make our lives wonderful.

The best way to make this shift is to keep a gratitude journal. Fill in the journal by listing the aspects of your life that give you gratitude. They can be big or small, people or things.

After each item you list, write *why* it makes you feel this way. This is an important step because in order to answer the question, you will think about it and you'll get the warm, fuzzy feeling that this person or thing gives you – and it will feel like a gift all over again!

You'll come to love this practice because of the way it makes you feel. And with repetition, that feeling can become lasting – taking you through the day with a more positive outlook on your life and more energy and motivation to take you through each day.

Here's how you can start right now:

I am grateful for:

I am grateful for this because: